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Ex-Pomona Student Revealed CIA Aid

A former Pomona College student Thursday was revealed as the person who disclosed to Ramparts magazine the Central Intelligence Agency financing of the National Student Association.

The young man, Michael Wood, 23, attended Pomona College in Claremont for two years, leaving in 1964 to take a full-time job with the National Student Association.

He then left NSA last September and moved to San Francisco, apparently to take a job with Ramparts.

Wood served as director of development and in charge of fund raising at NSA. He said that he learned that the CIA was financing NSA from Philip Sherburne, NSA president in 1965-1966.

The young man, who left Pomona College without graduating despite an excellent grade average, said that he "betrayed the trust" of Sherburne because he considers the matter "a case study in CIA corruption."

He said, "The specter of CIA infiltration of domestic institutions and the covert creation of them — must horrify those who regard unfettered debate as vital to representative democracy."

Meanwhile, members of the Pomona College faculty and administration remember Wood as a "sincere and dedicated" student.

He sat on the student council as commissioner of academic affairs.

Wood was also founder and first president of the Human Relations Council, and, in 1964, arranged a human rights conference at the school which received national attention. The conference that he created is still held annually at the college.

Shelton L. Beatty, dean of men at Pomona College, said, "He did a brilliant job. He became quite wrapped up in the conference."

"He was a very bright student," Dean Beatty recalled. "He was a very lively person with a great deal of energy and verve. He felt that college should be a place where students should relate their studies to the world."

"What surprises me," the dean continued, "is that anyone could think the NSA is being directed by the CIA. NSA seems to be a very independent minded group. I've felt they've had constructive ideas."

Wood is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Walbridge Wood of Banning. He graduated from Coachella Valley High School and attended the University of California at Berkeley for a year before transferring to Pomona.

Along with serving on the student council, he also wrote for the college newspaper and worked on the campus radio station, KSPC.

Meanwhile, Dennis Shaul, NSA president in 1962-1963 and now a lawyer in Akron, Ohio, acknowledged receipt of the CIA funds but denied the agency had any part in making policy. He also denied CIA had used students to spy or had "infiltrated the ranks" of student leaders.

He said that if he were still president, he would continue to accept the funds. He said that funds also came from the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Institution.

Shaul said, "I had no more problems with that (CIA) money than I had with any other money."

He also said that funds were used to send students abroad to talk with young people from developing nations, attending youth festivals — including some youth festivals under Communist sponsorship.

Shaul declared, "At the Eighth World Youth Festival in Helsinki in 1959, we asked why did the Soviets resume open-air nuclear testing if they're so intent on peace. They had a hard time answering, and that one question changed a lot of viewpoints."

MORI/CDP